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ABSTRACT

This practicum was designed to reduce incidents of harassment among middle school students and increase their sensitivity toward harassment, through both the conflict resolution process of peer mediation and group exercises. To attain this goal the following procedures were developed: (1) a student self-assessment instrument and its pre- and post-administrations; (2) materials for group sessions; (3) an informational brochure for teachers and parents; (4) peer mediators were selected and trained with a marketed program; (5) all peer mediation sessions were scheduled; (6) sessions for peer mediators to strengthen skills were conducted; and (7) student group was formed to develop a building policy on harassment. Analysis of data revealed a 42.2% decrease in students reporting incidents of harassment on the self-assessment instrument, and substantial decrease in undesirable response to some, but not all, attitudinal statements. Peer mediators reported successfully applying to their own lives, the mediation skills they learned. Extensive appendices include all the surveys, instruments, and materials. Contains 37 references. (Author/JBJ)

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ED 393 027

Stemming Harassment among Middle School Students through Peer Mediation and Group Exercises

by

Paul P. McMahon

Cluster 53

A Practicum II Report Presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

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This practicum took place as described.

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Approved:

8-22-95
Date of Final Approval of Report

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ABSTRACT

Stemming Harassment among Middle School Students through Peer Mediation and Group Exercises. McMahon, Paul P., 1995: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Harassment/Bullying/ Violence.

This practicum was designed to reduce incidents of harassment among middle school students and increase their sensitivity toward harassment, through both the conflict resolution process of peer mediation and group exercises.

This writer developed a student self assessment instrument and conducted its pre and post administrations; developed materials for group sessions; developed an informational brochure for teachers and parents; selected peer mediators and trained them with a marketed program; scheduled all peer mediation sessions; conducted sessions for peer mediators to strengthen skills; and worked with students to form a building policy on harassment.

Analysis of data revealed a 42.2% decrease in students reporting incidents of harassment on the self assessment instrument, and substantial decrease in undesirable response to some, but not all, attitudinal statements. Peer mediators reported successfully applying to their own lives, the mediation skills they learned .

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The school district in which this practicum was conducted is in its 43rd year as a centralized district formed from several small, rural districts. It is roughly rectangular in shape, measuring 34 miles at its longest north to south distance and 17 miles at its longest east to west distance. It serves 5500 students in four elementary, two middle and one high school. The student population has tripled in the last 25 years as farms, apple orchards and wooded lands have become developed for housing.

Within the district are agricultural, rural village and bedroom communities. The families run the full span of lower and middle socioeconomic groups. Since the district is 65 miles from a major metropolitan area, there are large numbers of blue and white collar workers living within the school district who commute to that metropolitan area. The majority of non-commuting parents work in agriculture, local light industry, commerce or service professions.

Every month families transfer into the district from that major metropolitan area. These new students bring values and cultures very different than those held by the students who were born and raised locally. Most of these transferred students assimilate into the mainstream student body, but some stand off, critical of the student body, and seek like-minded transfer students to form their own groups. Likewise, some native born students are not open to mixing with newcomers and form their own groups.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

This practicum is being effected with sixth, seventh and eighth graders in one of the middle schools. More than 90% of the professional staff of this middle school has earned a masters degree. The staff is mature, stable, of high morale and experienced, with more than 75% involved in educating young people for 15 years or longer.

The student body of this middle school has some representatives of each of the different racial groups. In this student body of about 600, 78.2% are Caucasian, 9.4% are Black, 9.2% are Hispanic, 2.5% are Asian or Pacific Islander, and 0.7% are American Indian or Alaskan Native. Racially, the professional staff of this school is 53 Caucasians and one Black. Diverse representations of

socioeconomic conditions, cultures and values are found within this school.

The writer has been a state education department certified guidance counselor for 14 years, holding a Master of Arts degree from the counseling program at Teachers College, Columbia University. He spends half of his time in each middle school.

He counsels students concerning personal, academic and career development matters. Personal counseling includes the full range of student concerns, with interpersonal relationships, decision making and self-esteem being frequent topics. Academic counseling also includes a wide range of concerns. Frequently these include discussion of attitudes toward study, selection of appropriate courses and development of an individual, tentative plan for four years of high school which will meet each student's goals. Parents are present for the development of their child's plan. Career counseling includes making students aware of the world of work, and helping each explore families of jobs in light of his or her own interests, personalities, physical capabilities, and academic skills and potential. The counselor also places all students in a daily schedule and makes changes when necessary.

This counselor believes that although the school atmosphere should be intellectually challenging it should at

the same time be physically appealing. Students should consider the school as a place where they feel comfortable and happy to be. They should be free from any physical concerns that would stand in the way of their educational pursuits. This involves freedom from all forms of harm including harassment or bullying, as well as the fear of being subjected to it. Children have a right to enter a school building knowing that it is a pleasant, supportive environment, where they are free to grow personally, socially and academically.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The problem is that harassment of students by other students is widespread in this middle school. Students often complain that one or more other students call them unflattering names because of some physical feature, or even for no apparent reason. Likewise, some complain of being ridiculed for not wearing apparel suitable to the latest clothing fad, or of being ignored by a whole group of peers because one of them seems to have been annoyed by something somehow related to the student being shunned.

Some students freely and deliberately harass their peers. These students offend, disturb, annoy and/or assault other students by language and/or action that is neither desired nor sought by the student receiving it. Sometimes the harassment is an unsuitable response precipitated by something said or done by the victim, but often the victim has no idea why he or she is being treated this way. This language or action can be overt or by innuendo. The student

on the receiving end becomes uncomfortable and finds the harassment troubling, painful, embarrassing, vexing and/or degrading. Sometimes the harassment is sexual in nature; always it is inappropriate.

Briefly stated then, the problem is that some middle school students deliberately harass other students, who, in turn, suffer unpleasant effects.

Problem Documentation

Observations by school personnel support the existence of this problem. As guidance counselor, this writer hears stories of harassment at least once a week from students who suffer such treatment. These 12 to 14 year old young adolescents are understandably upset by treatment they are receiving and are seeking relief. Also as guidance counselor, this writer receives referrals from teachers at least twice each month suggesting that contact be made with some offending student. These bullies can be from any socioeconomic group, racial group or group of friends in the school.

The building principal has identified harassment as the biggest problem in this school. The assistant principal has assessed that more than half of the fights in school are caused by harassment leading to anger. Many

teachers report that when they monitor hallways between periods they frequently become aware of at least one incident of harassment, usually by overhearing name calling.

Each team of teachers responded to the survey reproduced in Appendix A. Their replies, summarized in Table 1, indicated three facts. First, many teachers spend an average of an hour or more each week settling disputes among students. Responses to this item ranged from a few minutes a couple of times a week, to five or more hours each week often followed by another hour or more on the telephone contacting the parents of the children involved. Second, many teachers spend an average of an hour or more each week settling down students who are upset because of problems with other students. Responses to this item ranged from about five minutes a week to at least five hours each week. Third, teachers are unanimous in seeing the need for a school program to help students solve interpersonal problems.

Two teams observed that incidents of student harassment seem to increase as the year progresses, causing greater problems in Spring than in Autumn.

Causative Analysis

This writer judges the causes of harassment to be

Table 1

Results of Survey of Teachers
(N = 15)

	Number reporting weekly time settling disputes between students	Number reporting weekly time settling down students upset by others
less than 30 minutes	1	2
30 minutes	2	2
1 hour	6	5
1.5 hours	2	2
2 hours	1	2
3 or more hours	3	2

Would you like a program in school to help students solve interpersonal problems?

yes	no
15	0

complex, but, nonetheless, usually containing parts, or all, of four elements. First, some students have such low self-esteem that they feel a need to harass other students. This harassment in some way makes the bully feel some improvement in his or her own self image. Sometimes they perceive those students they harass to be inferior to themselves in some way. For these bullies, their harassing activity fortifies what little superiority they feel. Sometimes they believe they are gaining needed respect among some of their peers. Unfortunately, there are times that this is true; this does cause regard from some peers. Sometimes they are trying to compensate for the effects of neglect, rejection by others, or lack of satisfactory attachment to others. This could be as a result of interaction with other peers, but many times it proceeds from their relationships with parents and other adults. And sometimes they are trying to divert attention away from something they perceive as a fault in themselves. By persecuting someone else whom they perceive to have that fault they are not only drawing attention away from themselves, but also they are likely feeling some degree of cleansing from that fault.

The second characteristic is that some students believe that harassing behavior is acceptable. Some have learned it through observing parents and other role models. As a consequence of their example, these adults are passing on

behaviors they themselves perceive as acceptable. Some students have accepted harassment from observation of such behavior in mass entertainment media. Often such lack of decorum on the part of the hero or other characters is considered a praiseworthy trait. Belief in the acceptability of harassing behavior is particularly true in cases of sexual harassment. Many students consider such behavior just another typical facet of interacting with others.

The third characteristic is that some victims are perceived as vulnerable because of an attribute they possess. Sometimes the attribute is a physical characteristic such as a limp, a visual or hearing impairment, a birthmark or a scar. Sometimes the attribute is a characteristic action such as a speech defect, a mannerism or a particular gait. Sometimes the attribute is the victim's lack of assertiveness and/or defense mechanisms. Any of these could cause a bully to target a victim.

The fourth characteristic is that sometimes students look at the situation in different ways and expect different results. Sometimes one or both are not willing to listen to the other's point of view. Instead, one, or both, just tries to enforce his or her own position or attitude. Sometimes they do not know the difference between

assertiveness and aggression. As a result, one of the students in such circumstances harasses the other, not really appreciating the offensiveness of his or her actions.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Other professionals have written about this problem, approaching it from a variety of perspectives.

Harassment occurs daily in schools throughout the United States. Many times it is perpetrated by students who already have socialization problems, which, if left unchecked, are likely to lead them into a situation requiring police intervention (Stephens, 1991). Whether through physical contact or non-physical communication, such as gestures or spoken language, this harassment is disturbing to the victim. However, often the victim does not make the situation known (McCoy, 1992). Instead, he or she just endures the unpleasantness. But schools need to be genial places where students experience an amiable atmosphere, and this is not the case when students harass one another for whatever reasons (Miller, 1993).

The causes of harassment tend to be complex. However, harassment draws impetus from defective relationships and experiences (Curcio & First, 1993). These could be with peers, siblings, parents, extended family members, clergy,

educators, or any other adults. The harasser feels a need to come into contact with someone else to exercise some domination over him or her (Bove, Hutchinson, & Lopez-Baez, 1993).

Sometimes students harass others because bullying is part of the value system held by them and their role models, including their parents (American School, 1993). In these situations the harassment is just considered a part of the culture, and probably never considered in itself. It is simply another value learned from observing the role models. Sometimes it is even learned through conversations with the role models. This is one of the ways that hatred of whole groups becomes transmitted to children. Prejudice and bigotry play an important role in causing harassment (Averre-Beeson, 1993).

Some students are harassers because it brings them recognition, no matter how unfavorable, from others (Goldman, 1991). These students crave the attention, regardless of whether it is praise or scolding. Students who harass others do not have much respect for themselves, and think that by harassing others they are becoming popular (Hazler, Hoover, & Oliver, 1993). They see the attention they receive, whether positive or negative, as somehow boosting their popularity.

Some students harass others because of their own lack

of sophistication and age appropriate behavior (Levine, 1993). For others harassment goes beyond immaturity and lack of social skills. Fearing that some other students might harass them over some prior event, some students harass others as a mechanism to avoid being harassed themselves (Marks, 1993). By diverting the attention to others, they feel they are protecting themselves.

The savagery presented by entertainment media persuades some students to harass others. It induces inclinations in some students toward the use of force to resolve situations not to their liking (Nesbitt, 1993). There is some evidence that tension can induce similar inclinations. The tension caused by academic pressures is the primary cause for some students to harass others (Greenlees, 1993).

Not all students become victims of harassment. Students who do not confidently approach others with genial communication, who lack the skills to convince others and who are easily induced to act by others, are most likely to become victims of harassment (Schwartz, Dodge, & Cole, 1993). Those students who are harassed are frequently children who are not liked by many of their peers (Rigby & Slee, 1991). Frequently, when students are harassed, they are preyed on by several students (LaFontaine, 1991).

The literature focuses on two main perspectives of causality, namely the harasser and the victim. The

harasser, or bully, tends to come from a dysfunctional family, to have some personality disorder, or to believe, mistakenly, that his or her aggressive actions are acceptable. The victim, on the other hand, tends to have a characteristic that the bully perceives as a weakness, and/or the victim tends to be non-assertive and have poor self-defense mechanisms.

The topical areas of this literature search are harassment, bullying and violence.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

In general, the goals are of this practicum are twofold. The first is a decrease in harassment among students. This writer would prefer to see harassment totally eliminated, but realizes that no matter what interventions are used, there are some students who will continue to be bullies. The second goal is an improvement in students' attitudes toward harassment. Students should have greater sensitivity toward harassment.

Expected Outcomes

In general, the expected outcome will be a greater sensitivity to harassment among students. In particular, two outcomes are expected. First, there will be a decrease in harassment among students as determined by pre and post administrations of the student self assessment instrument. Second, there will be an improvement in students' attitudes

toward harassment as determined by pre and post administrations of the student self assessment instrument.

The student self assessment instrument is the evaluation tool being used. It was designed to measure both incidence of harassment and student attitude toward it through student self reporting. The student self assessment instrument will be administered to all students at both the beginning and the end of the practicum implementation. A copy of this instrument can be found in Appendix B.

For the purpose of this practicum, "student harassment" will be considered to be any language or action by which one student deliberately offends, disturbs, annoys and/or assaults another student, whether overtly or by innuendo, when that student neither desires nor seeks such attention.

Measurement of Outcomes

This writer will measure success by decreases in two areas on the student self assessment instrument designed by the writer for this purpose, and intended to be used in both the pre and post practicum inventories.

The first hoped for decrease is in the occurrence of harassment among students. Students will respond "yes" or "no" to two questions, "Has anyone bullied you during the last month?" and "Have you bullied someone during the last

month?" The writer will expect a decrease of at least 50% in the percentage of students responding "yes" to each of these questions. If a student does respond "yes" to one of these questions, he or she is then asked how often this has occurred. The possible responses are "1 or 2 times," "3 to 5 times," "6 to 10 times," and "more than 10 times." A numerical score will be assigned to each response, starting with the score of one assigned to "1 or 2 times", and progressing to a score of four for "more than 10 times." The writer expects a decrease in the mean for the responses between the pre and post administrations for each question.

The second hoped for decrease is in the number of unfavorable responses to attitudinal statements about harassment. Students will respond to each of six attitudinal statements with "agree" or "disagree." The writer expects a decrease of at least 50% in the percentage of unfavorable responses for at least three of the statements.

This writer realizes the likelihood of a different number of respondents to the pre and post administrations of the student self assessment instrument. In the eight month time period between them, it is probable that some families will move away. Therefore, in the areas already mentioned, the writer is expecting a decrease in percentage of the total number of students responding unfavorably.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The problem is that some middle school students deliberately harass other students, who, in turn, suffer unpleasant effects. In the judgment of this writer there are too many incidents of bullying in this school. Solutions have been suggested in the literature and both enhanced and applied by this writer.

Prevention of harassment is the best policy. Educators should plan an organized effort among students and staff to keep any harassment from happening (Connecticut Women's, 1991). *All* educators and students should work together on a program to prevent harassment before it can occur. Core to this is helping everyone develop the opinion that harassment is unacceptable. However, the program should specify that where harassment does occur counseling is provided for both victim and perpetrator (Tattum & Herbert, 1992).

Harassment is so intricate that a variety of components are required in addressing it. However, educators *must* step

in and direct a solution (LaFontaine, 1991). Educators and students joining in open communication and exchanging ideas about harassment are important steps toward stopping it (Higginson, 1993). Together they should develop a strategy to combat it. A lucid plan, explicitly outlining harassing behavior and setting the procedure for victims to report harassment to proper authority is core to fighting it (Eaton, 1993). The plan must consider that at present victims of harassment usually try to disregard both the harassment and the harasser. Victims tend to keep quiet about their experience. However, if they do verbalize their feelings at all, it is usually with parents or peers. Whenever they express their feelings to someone, that person should help them try to be assertive with the harasser (Cochran & Frazier, 1992). Role playing can be helpful in this regard. By rehearsing possible situations, students should be taught ways that, when bullied, they can respond in a calm, neutralizing manner (Marks, 1993). Students must be taught procedures to defend themselves when they are harassed. This can be done through role playing also. But this is not enough. They must also be convinced of the need to report all harassing episodes to proper school authorities (Prestage, 1993).

One way educators could combat harassment is by installing surveillance cameras in those areas of the school

where harassment is most likely to occur. Then, when they observe incidents of harassment on the videotapes, they should identify the harassers, and show them the videotapes of their actions. This can be an aid in making them more aware of both their actions and the consequences for their victims. But then, the educators must also identify those who are harassed, and give them needed help and encouragement (O'Malley, 1993).

Educators should give precedence to stopping harassment. Part of this is making sure that all students understand the discrepancy between acceptable and unacceptable actions. Many do not really understand the difference. All students also should be given mechanisms for asserting themselves when harassed. Many do not have such skills. But these can be learned in places other than school. Educators should encourage role models from outside the school to support the efforts (Mentell, 1993).

As part of their plan to prevent harassment, educators must teach children peaceful ways of approaching unpleasant situations, ones that will avoid confrontation (Nesbitt, 1993). But since some clashes are inevitable, all students must learn amicable ways to resolve conflicts. This can be done as one of the dynamics involving them in their own education (Maruyama, 1992).

Students must be educated in ways to resolve disputes

peacefully. But this is not enough. Role models, including parents, must be taught ways to resolve their own disputes peacefully. Toward these ends, educators must work to eliminate both the societal sanctioning of harassment, and the constant exhibition of harassment to students as part of their entertainment. In addition, educators must teach appropriate, positive techniques for self assertion among those students most likely to be harassed (U.S. Department of Health, 1992).

Some writers support peer mediation as a way to fight harassment, and others offer suggestions to enhance such a program. Peer mediation is a process in which a student helps his or her colleagues reach a decision on steps to relieve a quarrel between them (Johnson & Johnson, 1991; Schrumpf, Crawford, & Usadel, 1991).

In peer mediation, discussion should be held between the student doing the harassing and the victim, in which they share each other's emotions, thoughts and feelings. Then they discuss ways the harassing student can make amends to the victim (Dore, 1992). The students are seeking a mutually agreeable resolution to a problem. To help with this, peer mediation should have at its core clear elucidation and interchange of all points of view (Partorino, 1993).

Those student peer mediators who most competently settle differences between other students have two

characteristics. First, in everyday situations other students look to them for direction, and second, they are known for their thoughtfulness toward others (Araki & Takeshita, 1991). Disputes occur among students within all groups in school. Therefore, it is very important that peer mediators should be selected from all the various groups among the pupils (Merina, 1993).

The task of the peer mediator is formidable. He or she must conduct the mediation in a manner that allows all parties to avoid humiliation before their peers (Commanday, 1993). The mediator must enable both parties to express their feelings verbally, but all parties must agree that no distress causing language will be used (Samalin & McCormick, 1993). This actually requires educators to do something to enhance this process, for children need to be taught to verbalize their feelings in an appropriate way. They need this as much as they need to be taught that harassment is not a desired way of acting (Levine, 1993).

Educators teach students the peer mediation process. But these educators need to master the ability to settle differences amicably themselves, prior to establishing a program to guide students in this process (Scherer, 1992; Deutsch, 1992). In conjunction with the peer mediation process, educators should arrange a series of events to impart to all students the abilities to engage others in civil conversation. Many students also have to be taught the basis for agreeable companionship. Then, too, educators

should try to engage role models from the family in this and all aspects of the campaign to stop harassment (Hazler, Hoover, & Oliver, 1993).

Sometimes, during the course of the peer mediation process, other problems come to the surface, for either or both disputants. Other times it becomes clear during peer mediation that one or both students have a propensity to act inappropriately. Therefore, when necessary, counseling must be available for those students involved in disputes (Power, 1992).

The theme that runs as a current throughout this literature is that children need to be taught to resolve their conflicts in a peaceful way. The resolution must be one that is fair, is acceptable to both of them, and presents a "win - win" situation. Children respond to initiatives from adults, but they need appropriate role modeling, direction, encouragement and support from educators and parents.

The writer agrees with this theme, and has two additional ideas of his own. First, during the pre administration of the student self assessment instrument, the writer will add an item asking each student to identify the peer he or she most trusts to talk to in times of personal problems. The writer will then compile a list of those students to determine whose names appear most often in response to that question and consider them as potential student mediators. He will then share that list with each

team of teachers and make any changes necessary to make sure that all groups of students are represented. Students will be asked to volunteer to be student mediators, but that list will provide additional information for the selection process. If any student on that list does not volunteer, one of the teachers on his or her team will be asked to approach that student, share the belief that the student would make a good peer mediator and suggest that the student volunteer his or her services.

Second, periodically, throughout the school year, educators should conduct group exercises in social awareness, self-esteem, communication skills and thinking skills. Such exercises, conducted in addition to peer mediation will help the student acquire skills useful for both the peer mediation process, and the avoidance of harassment.

Description of Selected Solution

This writer is prepared to lead both teachers and students in a peer mediation program he believes will be successful and stem student harassment.

First, the writer will explain the program to teachers and enlist their support. Then he will explain the program to students and encourage them to seek peer mediation when necessary. Second, the writer, along with three teacher volunteers, will participate in peer mediation training.

This group will supervise the selection and training of peer mediators for the school. One member of this group will also be present whenever a mediation session is conducted by these trained peer mediators. Third, the writer will provide topics and materials to teachers for class discussions. On each team, teachers will decide which class to use for discussions. Then teachers will conduct discussions within their team of students. Fourth, students will refer themselves, or their friends, for peer mediation. Teachers, also, will identify students in need of peer mediation. Fifth, the writer will schedule peer mediation sessions, and oversee the peer mediation program.

This writer believes that this program will be effective for a variety of reasons. Teachers will be able to feel some ownership for the program, because they will be involved in several ways. Each team of teachers will decide the days and classes in which the group exercises will occur for the students on their team, and decide which teachers will conduct these group exercises. All teachers will be able to identify and refer students in possible need of mediation. In addition, three teachers will participate in peer mediation training with the writer and help in running the program.

Students, also, will be able to feel some ownership for the program. Students will be able to refer themselves and those with whom they have a dispute. They will be given educators to contact and a process to follow to stop being

harassed. Students will also be able to refer those friends whom they consider in need of peer mediation. Students will be asked to volunteer to become peer mediators. However, students also will be identifying student leaders, who will be encouraged to volunteer, so that all groups of students are represented among the peer mediators. Thus students identified as trustworthy by their peers will be peer mediators. Ten students from each grade, a total of thirty students, will be trained as peer mediators.

The group discussions in class will heighten student awareness and improve student attitudes toward harassment. The discussion activities will be developed by the writer to last approximately 20 minutes each.

The peer mediation program used will be Peer Mediation: Conflict Resolution in Schools, by Fred Schrumpf, Donna Crawford and H. Chu Usadell (1991). As a program objective for the peer mediators, their role should help them attain growth in five areas. These are, first, the ability to be non partisan in others' disputes; second, the ability to hear others in an insightful way; third, the ability to act toward others with courtesy; fourth, the ability to set the stage for others to resolve disputes; and fifth, the ability to keep information private, when responsible to do so. Evaluation of what student mediators have learned from the program will be achieved through a self assessment instrument designed by the writer for this purpose, and presented in Appendix C.

This writer will take leadership of the peer mediation program. He will discuss the project with the building principal and district administrators to elicit their support. Included in this support will be financial support for photocopying and materials. The writer will then discuss the peer mediation project with his fellow guidance counselor, the school psychologist and the faculty to elicit their support. The writer will then reach out for parental support through an article in the school newsletter to parents.

This writer will oversee the peer mediation program. He will supervise the selection and training of students to become peer mediators. As needed, this writer will schedule peer mediation sessions and assign peer mediators. He will provide student group discussion activities and materials to teachers. To insure uniformity of presentation, this writer will conduct all administrations, pre and post, of the student self assessment instrument.

Report of Action Taken

The time line was eight months.

Month 1, Week 1

- This writer explained the peer mediation program to his fellow guidance counselor and the school psychologist.
- This writer explained the peer mediation project to the faculty.

Month 1, Week 2

- This writer made a follow up presentation to faculty
- This writer began pre administration of the student self assessment instrument to classes.
- This writer began explaining the peer mediation project to classes.
- This writer drafted a letter to parents explaining the project and eliciting their support.

Month 1, Week 3

- This writer completed pre administration of the student self assessment instrument to classes.
- This writer completed explaining the peer mediation project to classes.
- This writer published a letter to parents explaining the project and eliciting their support.

Month 1, Week 4

- This writer and three other faculty members underwent peer mediation training.

Month 2, Week 1

- The process of identifying student mediators began.
- Parent permission was sought for each student applying to undergo peer mediation training.

Month 2, Week 2

- The process of identifying student mediators continued.

Month 2, Week 3

- The process of identifying student mediators concluded.

Month 2, Week 4

- Student mediators were trained.
- Student body was informed of process for requesting peer mediation.

Month 3, Week 1

- Sessions took place for student mediators to strengthen mediation skills.
- Peer mediation took place as needed.
- This writer delivered materials to teachers for conducting a group session on harassment.

Month 3, Week 2

- Sessions took place for student mediators to strengthen mediation skills.
- Peer mediation took place as needed.
- All students participated in a group session on harassment.

Month 3, Week 3

- Sessions took place for student mediators to strengthen mediation skills.
- Peer mediation took place as needed.
- This writer delivered materials to teachers for conducting a group session on elements of friendship.

Month 3, Week 4

- Sessions took place for student mediators to strengthen mediation skills.
- Peer mediation took place as needed.
- All students participated in a group session on elements of friendship.

Month 4, Week 1

- Sessions took place for student mediators to strengthen mediation skills.
- Peer mediation took place as needed.
- This writer delivered materials to teachers for conducting a group session on when and how to give and accept apologies.

Month 4, Week 2

- Sessions took place for student mediators to strengthen mediation skills.
- Peer mediation took place as needed.
- All students participated in a group session on when and how to give and accept apologies.

Month 4, Week 3

- Sessions took place for student mediators to strengthen mediation skills.
- Peer mediation took place as needed.
- This writer delivered materials to teachers for conducting a group session on body language.

Month 4, Week 4

- Sessions took place for student mediators to strengthen mediation skills.
- Peer mediation took place as needed.
- All students participated in a group session on body language.

Month 5, Week 1

- Sessions took place for student mediators to strengthen

mediation skills.

- Peer mediation took place as needed.
- This writer delivered materials to teachers for conducting a group session on handling embarrassment.

Month 5, Week 2

- Sessions took place for student mediators to strengthen mediation skills.
- Peer mediation took place as needed.
- All students participated in a group session on handling embarrassment.

Month 5, Week 3

- Sessions took place for student mediators to strengthen mediation skills.
- Peer mediation took place as needed.
- This writer delivered materials to teachers for conducting a group session on listening skills.

Month 5, Week 4

- Sessions took place for student mediators to strengthen mediation skills.
- Peer mediation took place as needed.
- All students participated in a group session on listening skills.

Month 6, Week 1

- Sessions took place for student mediators to strengthen mediation skills.
- Peer mediation took place as needed.
- This writer delivered materials to teachers for conducting

a group session on loneliness.

Month 6, Week 2

- Sessions took place for student mediators to strengthen mediation skills.
- Peer mediation took place as needed.
- All students participated in a group session on loneliness.

Month 6, Week 3

- Sessions took place for student mediators to strengthen mediation skills.
- Peer mediation took place as needed.
- This writer delivered materials to teachers for conducting a group session on being angry.

Month 6, Week 4

- Sessions took place for student mediators to strengthen mediation skills.
- Peer mediation took place as needed.
- All students participated in a group session on being angry.

Month 7, Week 1

- Sessions took place for student mediators to strengthen mediation skills.
- Peer mediation took place as needed.
- Teachers began group sessions in all classes, aimed at establishing a building statement about harassment.

Month 7, Week 2

- Sessions took place for student mediators to strengthen

mediation skills.

- Peer mediation took place as needed.
- Teachers concluded group sessions in all classes, aimed at establishing a building statement about harassment.
- Each class selected a student representative to a building committee to establish a statement on harassment.

Month 7, Week 3

- Sessions took place for student mediators to strengthen mediation skills.
- Peer mediation took place as needed.
- This writer began meeting with the committee of student representatives to establish a building statement on harassment.

Month 7, Week 4

- Sessions took place for student mediators to strengthen mediation skills.
- Peer mediation took place as needed.
- This writer continued meeting with the committee of student representatives to establish a building statement on harassment.

Month 8, Week 1

- Sessions took place for student mediators to strengthen mediation skills.
- Peer mediation took place as needed.
- This writer concluded meeting with the committee of student representatives to establish a building statement on harassment.

Month 8, Week 2

- Sessions took place for student mediators to strengthen mediation skills.
- Peer mediation took place as needed.
- Each class representative to the building committee promulgated the building statement on harassment to his or her class.

Month 8, Week 3

- Peer mediation took place as needed.
- This writer began post administration of the student self assessment instrument to classes.

Month 8, Week 4

- Peer mediation took place as needed.
- This writer concluded post administration of the student self assessment instrument to classes.
- This writer administered the self assessment instrument for peer mediators.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The hoped for end result was a decrease in harassment among students. This writer anticipated measuring this decline through decreases in two areas on the student self assessment instrument designed by the writer for this purpose and used for both the pre and post practicum inventories.

The first area of decrease was in the occurrence of harassment. The goal was to measure a 50% decrease in the percentage of students responding "yes" to each of two questions, "Has anyone bullied you during the last month?" and "Have you bullied someone during the last month?" Although there was a measurable decrease, this targeted outcome was not achieved. As seen in Appendix E, in the pre administration of the student self assessment instrument 211 students indicated that they had been bullied during the preceding month, and in the post administration this number dropped to 122 students. This diminishing among 89 students is a decrease of 42.2%. Likewise, in the pre administration

of the student self assessment instrument 218 students indicated they had bullied someone else during the preceding month, and in the post administration this number dropped to 171 students. This diminishing among 47 students is a decrease of 21.6%

In an attempt to determine whether or not there was a decrease in the average number of incidents being reported by those still noting occurrence of harassment, this writer assigned a numerical score of four to the least favorable response, "more than 10 times," down to a score of one for "1 or 2 times." On the post administration he expected a decrease in the mean for the responses to both questions. This targeted outcome was not achieved. As seen in Table 2, the mean number of incidents among those reported being bullied is 2.0 for both the pre and post administrations of the student self assessment instrument. If this calculation were carried out two decimal places, there would actually be a slight increase. The mean number of incidents among those reporting bullying others did increase from 1.8 for the pre administration to 2.1 for the post administration.

The second area of expected decrease was in the number of unfavorable responses to the attitudinal statements on the student self assessment instrument, measured by a decrease of at least 50% in the percentage of unfavorable responses for at least three of the six statements. Although there was measurable decrease in unfavorable response for all six statements, five of which were a

Table 2

Mean Values for Number of Incidents of Harassment Reported on the Student Self Assessment Instrument

Has anyone bullied you during the last month?

	Boys	Girls	Total
Grade 6			
Pre	2.0	1.9	2.0
Post	2.3	2.1	2.2
Grade 7			
Pre	2.1	2.2	2.2
Post	2.1	1.6	1.6
Grade 8			
Pre	1.8	1.8	1.8
Post	1.9	1.5	1.7
Total School			
Pre	2.0	2.0	2.0
Post	2.1	1.8	2.0

Have you bullied someone during the last month?

	Boys	Girls	Total
Grade 6			
Pre	2.3	1.6	1.9
Post	2.2	1.7	1.9
Grade 7			
Pre	1.7	1.4	1.6
Post	2.5	1.6	2.2
Grade 8			
Pre	2.0	1.8	1.9
Post	2.1	2.2	2.1
Total School			
Pre	2.0	1.7	1.8
Post	2.3	1.9	2.1

definite decrease, this targeted outcome was not achieved. As seen in Appendix E, none had a decrease of 50%. The largest decrease was 36.7%, representing a drop of 51 students agreeing with the statement, "If I am having a problem with someone, I should get my friends to ignore him or her."

In summary, pre and post practicum administrations of the student self assessment instrument did indicate a definite, measurable decrease in both incidents of harassment and unfavorable attitudes toward statements about harassment. However, these decreases were not of the magnitude anticipated by this writer.

Discussion

Considerations must be given to two aspects of this practicum. The first is the program of peer mediation plus group exercises and its implementation. The second is the collection of results as measured on the pre and post administrations of the student self assessment instrument, the administration of the self assessment instrument for peer mediators and the building statement on harassment.

Early in the implementation of the practicum, opposition rose from an unexpected source, the teachers' union. Since teachers were working without a contract, some union representatives were opposed to starting a new program, especially if it meant that union members would

volunteer time after school, without financial compensation. Fortunately, the master schedule for the school had been designed to meet the need for team planning and meeting time. This meant positioning all study halls for a grade level during the same period, plus a common lunch for each grade level. Seventh and eighth grades had study hall when sixth grade had lunch. This schedule allowed all peer mediation sessions to take place during study hall or lunch. The building principal provided compensatory duty coverage for the teachers working with this teacher on the peer mediation project. Once it was agreed that working with peer mediation was substituted for an assigned duty for those teachers involved, and that all sessions would take place during the school day, the teachers' union dropped opposition to the program.

Exactly as planned, three teachers plus this writer participated in peer mediation training. However, subsequent to the training, a problem arose with one of these teachers. She felt that the program was progressing too fast and should be discussed for two or three years before implementation. When it became apparent that the peer mediation program would advance as planned, she stopped participating in the program. As a result, two teachers, instead of three, worked with this writer, and were referred to as the Peer Mediation Committee.

The initial presentation of peer mediation to the faculty raised many questions. So that there would be no

misunderstanding, as a follow up to the meeting, this writer, with input from the committee, prepared the document in question and answer form, in Appendix F. This was disseminated to teachers immediately. Further discussion was encouraged at the next faculty meeting, at which time teacher support for peer mediation was expressed in a near unanimous vote of confidence.

This same document was attached to the student application to be a peer mediator, as seen in Appendix G. Both parent and student were to read the document, then sign the application form. In addition, all parents were informed of peer mediation through the article published in the school newsletter soliciting support, as seen in Appendix H.

As seen in Appendix B, the last item for completion on the pre administration of the student self assessment instrument was "When I am having a personal problem, the student I trust most to talk about it is ... ." One name appeared five times, all others less than five times. Obviously, this item did not identify widely trusted students, as has been anticipated. Therefore, teachers identified students known by them to be looked upon by their peers with respect, and individually encouraged each of these students to apply for training as a peer mediator.

After students who wished to apply returned their applications, these forms were separated by team. Each team's group of teachers identified those students from

their team whom they considered to have demonstrated good communication skills, good thinking ability, good judgment, sufficient maturity to keep information confidential and sufficient assertiveness to enforce rules. In addition, these students held respect among their peers.

The Peer Mediation Committee interviewed these candidates and selected representatives from every group in school. There were boys and girls; members of all races; honor society members and students barely passing; athletes, musicians and students with no other extracurricular activity; and students classified for special education as well as students considered gifted and talented. These students covered the span of social sub-groups in school. Unfortunately, however, no African-American males were interested in applying to be peer mediators, despite the fact that several were personally encouraged to do so by teachers.

Peer mediators were trained according to the program, Peer Mediation: Conflict Resolution in Schools, by Schrumpf, Crawford and Usadel. A small room was set up for peer mediation sessions and posters listing the ground rules and the steps of mediation were on the wall. Teachers could refer students in need of mediation and students could refer either themselves or friends. Teachers and friends making referrals were asked to make sure both sides agreed to mediation beforehand. A student could refer himself or herself without contacting the other party about it. In

such cases this writer contacted the other party. Peer mediation request forms, as seen in Appendix I, were designed by the Peer Mediation Committee. Copies were kept in the Guidance Office, where they were to be picked up and returned. This writer scheduled all sessions and assigned peer mediators plus one of the Peer Mediation Committee members for each session.

Students and teachers were slow moving in using the referral process for the first few months. Some weeks there was one referral and some, none. Most of these early referrals were made by teachers. Slowly, the numbers of referrals increased, and at the end of the school year there were regularly three, four or five peer mediation sessions per week. There were a total of 41 peer mediation sessions for the period of the practicum, which concluded at the end of the school year. Unfortunately, none of these sessions involved eighth grade students in conflict. Perhaps they were not as trusting of the value of peer mediation as were sixth and seventh grade students. Those students who were eighth graders during the period of this practicum will move to a different building for ninth grade, so this writer anticipates that the new eighth grade students will continue with the attitude toward peer mediation which they held as seventh graders.

Teachers who conducted the group sessions, using the materials seen in Appendix D, reported that students got into proper spirit for these sessions. Feedback to this

writer indicated that they judged the sessions to be well received and thought provoking.

In the time between the pre and post administrations of the student self assessment inventory, 43 students entered the school and 27 left, as shown in Table 3. This resulted in a net gain of 16 to the school population. In the post administration of the instrument, new students were instructed to write the word "new" in the upper right hand corner of their inventory form. Spot calculations were done both including those students and omitting them. As expected by the small number of new students in relation to the school population, there was no appreciable difference between the two calculations, so new students are included in the results in Appendix E.

As seen in Appendix E, school wide, the greatest improvements measured in the attitudinal statements were for "Girls like the attention when boys mess up their hair," "When you are verbally threatened you are harmed," and "If I am having a problem with someone, I should get my friends to ignore him or her." "It is O.K. to pass notes to my friend about someone I don't like" measured moderate change. "It is O.K. to hit someone who hits me first" showed the least amount of change. This attitudinal statement caused the greatest amount of discussion. This writer told students to walk away from a fight, and seek resolution through communication, especially peer mediation. The boys' physical education teacher told this writer that during a

Table 3

Numbers of Students Entering and Leaving
Between Pre and Post Administrations
of Student Self Assessment Instrument

	Number of Students Entered	Number of Students Left	Change in Enrollment
Grade 6			
Boys	6	1	+5
Girls	4	6	-2
Total	10	7	+3
Grade 7			
Boys	8	4	+4
Girls	7	3	+4
Total	15	7	+8
Grade 8			
Boys	10	5	+5
Girls	8	8	0
Total	18	13	+5
Total School			
Boys	24	10	+14
Girls	19	17	+2
Total	43	27	+16

seventh grade physical education class, boys questioned him about this writer's position. This teacher told the boys "first deck anyone who hits you, then ask questions later." The instrument results indicate that seventh grade boys prefer that teacher's attitude.

For one and only one attitudinal statement, "If someone picks on me I tell an adult," the change does not improve above the range of the margin of error. The range of the margin of error for the pre administration slightly overlaps the range for the post administration. Thus, we cannot be certain of real improvement in this attitude.

This writer's discussions with students concerning telling adults about harassment, indicates that the students in this school do not accept that statement as a blanket one about telling *any* adults. They seem to feel that the situation would most likely get worse if most adults were to enter the picture. However, most students seem to indicate that there might be one or two adults, but not others, they could tell. A few indicated that they would tell guidance counselors, but not adults, as if the two were somehow mutually exclusive. This writer suspects that had the phrase "whom I trust" been added, so that the statement read "If someone picks on me, I tell an adult whom I trust," the number of students responding "agree" would be significantly higher.

For this writer, sixth grade girls, as a group, had the least encouraging differences in response to attitudinal

statements between pre and post administrations of the student self assessment instrument. For the statement "Girls like the attention when boys mess up their hair," there were 14 sixth grade girls agreeing both times. In the post administration, one of these girls was new. Apparently there are 14 sixth grade girls who like the attention they receive when boys mess up their hair. For the statement, "It is O.K. to hit someone who hits me first," 42 sixth grade girls agreed both times. In the post administration, one of these girls was new. It is possible that for each of the statements, girls responded the same way each time, and that few, if any, of these girls changed their minds during the implementation of the practicum.

For two attitude statements the number of sixth grade girls selecting the unfavorable responses actually increased. For the statement "It is O.K. to pass notes to my friend about someone I don't like," 25 girls agreed in the pre administration, but 37 girls, two of whom were new, agreed in the post administration. For the statement "If I am having a problem with someone, I should get my friends to ignore him or her," 16 girls agreed in the pre administration, but 20 girls, two of whom were new, agreed in the post administration. Perhaps the lack of improvement in attitude among this small number of girls reflects the pressure of a peer sub-culture. Fortunately, for all four of these statements, the other sixth grade girls, in substantial numbers, gave favorable responses.

This writer was inquisitive about the number of students who responded "yes" to both items, "Has anyone bullied you during the last month?" and "Have you bullied someone during the last month?" As can be seen by comparing Table 4 with Appendix E, on the pre administration of the student self assessment instrument, 101 students responding "yes" to either, responded that way to both. This was 47.9% of the 211 responding "yes" to being bullied and 46.3% of those responding "yes" to bullying others. It was 17.1 % of the entire 589 students in the school. The largest frequencies occurred in the "1 or 2 times" category. Among sixth and eighth grade students, the number responding "yes" to both questions dropped considerably in the post administration. Likewise, the number responding "yes" to either one of these questions dropped considerably. Most of the decline was in the number responding "1 or 2 times." In the post administration 55 students responded "yes" to both. This was 45.1% of the 122 students responding "yes" to being bullied and 32.2% of the 171 responding "yes" to bullying others. It was 9.1% of the 605 students in the entire school. As already pointed out, most of the decline was among sixth and eighth graders; decline among seventh graders was minimal. This writer is at a loss for a possible explanation.

When gathering the completed student self assessment instruments from each class, this writer collected them one at a time, quickly glancing at each one to make sure

Table 4

Students Who Responded "Yes" to Both
Being Bullied and Bullying Others

	Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8		Total	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Boys								
N=	21	9	18	15	17	7	56	31
been bullied								
1-2 times	9	3	10	8	6	2	25	13
3-5 times	5	3	2	1	8	3	15	7
6-10 times	5	1	2	2	1	2	8	5
more than 10	2	2	4	4	2	0	8	6
bullied others								
1-2 times	11	5	15	6	8	3	34	14
3-5 times	5	3	1	2	5	3	11	8
6-10 times	0	0	2	1	1	0	3	1
more than 10	5	1	0	6	3	1	8	8
Girls								
N=	21	8	11	10	13	6	45	24
been bullied								
1-2 times	10	4	8	3	5	5	23	12
3-5 times	7	2	1	6	3	0	11	8
6-10 times	1	0	0	1	4	1	5	2
more than 10	3	2	2	0	1	0	6	2
bullied others								
1-2 times	13	5	9	3	6	4	28	12
3-5 times	3	1	0	4	2	1	5	6
6-10 times	2	0	0	2	2	0	4	2
more than 10	3	2	2	1	3	1	8	4

response was made to every item, and to have them completed where necessary. When picking up the post administration from the eighth grade Special Education Social Studies class, this writer noticed that six of the nine students, four of the five boys and two of the four girls responded that they had bullied someone within the last month. Realizing that this was severely out of synchronization with the ratio for the rest of the school, this writer kept the responses from the special education classes separate from the rest of the surveys and tallied them separately before adding these results in with the rest of the student body. Since most of the school's special education students are included in regular classes with supportive help, the responses from these special education classes were from students who were not able to succeed when included in regular classes with supportive help. For the most part, responses from students in these special education classes were in the same ratio as the rest of the student body. However, there were a few exceptions other than the one that originally attracted this writer's attention. Four of the six boys in seventh grade and two of the three girls in sixth grade also responded that they had bullied someone within the last month. All five boys in eighth grade, two of the four girls in eighth grade and three of the six boys in seventh grade agree with the statement "If I am having a problem with someone, I should get my friends to ignore him or her." Three of the four eighth grade girls agreed with

the statement "It is O.K. to pass notes to my friend about someone I don't like." The statement, "It is O.K. to hit someone who hits me first," was overwhelmingly agreed to by all except the seventh grade girls. As stated earlier, these are special education students who are not able to succeed when included in regular classes, even with supportive help. Among the many problems they have, a good number have socialization difficulties. This is reflected in their responses.

The Self Assessment Instrument for Peer Mediators, as seen in Appendix C, required responses through subjective comments, which are not quantifiable. This instrument was administered to all peer mediators, by this writer, during the last week.

For the first item, "Give an example of how being a peer mediator helped you develop or strengthen the ability to hear others in an insightful way," most referred to understanding feelings and/or points of view of "others." Most often the "others" were friends, then family members. One eighth grade girl observed that she finds herself listening to others in situations where previously she would have just yelled.

For the second item, "Give an example of how being a peer mediator helped you develop or strengthen the ability to act toward others with courtesy," most responded that they are "nicer," "kinder," or "more considerate." Two mediators, a sixth grade boy and a seventh grade girl,

observed that they no longer made fun of other people. One eighth grade girl reported "I now stick up for people who are being ganged up on," and one sixth grade girl wrote, "I never pull my sister's hair first."

In response to the third item, "What else did you learn from being a peer mediator?" most of the answers involved the importance of neutrality and/or confidentiality. Three mediators, a sixth grade girl, a seventh grade girl and a seventh grade boy, indicated that they learned skills to use in dealing with their own problems with others. One eighth grade boy wrote he learned "that everyone has trouble getting along, not just me."

Responses to the fourth item, "What steps in the mediation process do you think you do very well?" and the fifth item, "What steps in the mediation process do you think you need to strengthen?" were varied, with no one step appearing widely strong or weak. Three students, a sixth grade girl, a sixth grade boy and a seventh grade boy, indicated that they did all steps well and did not need to strengthen any.

In the judgment of this writer, the responses of the peer mediators on this instrument indicate that the training and experience as peer mediators helped each peer mediator grow in his or her own ability to handle conflicts.

When the group of students met with this writer to prepare the building statement on harassment, it approached the task in three parts. The first part is of actions seen

in the school which these students, and most students, do not like. The second part contains attributes of the school as they would like to see it. The third part is action they would like to see promoted to improve the school. During these discussions, students were working at the concrete operational stage, always speaking in terms of individual people and individual situations. Abstracting from the particular to the universal, in order to write this document, appeared to be a formidable task for them. This writer changed the name of the school to "this school" when recording the document in Appendix J.

Recommendations

It seems to this writer that resolution of harassment, as with all resolution of conflicts between students, could be approached by three possible methods.

The first possible way would be by avoidance. The victim could avoid those situations or locations that would bring him or her into contact with the bully. Or perhaps some authority figure could sit down with both parties and tell them to stay away from one another. Maybe the victim could just ignore the aggressor with the hopes that the bully would see that he or she is not really bothering the victim, give up and leave him or her alone. Avoidance might work in a few cases, but it does not really address the conflict, get at its cause and bring about a satisfactory

resolution.

The second possible way would be through confrontation. The conflicting students could face each other, shout at one another, possibly even have a physical altercation; but such confrontation never solves anything. Sometimes there is a winner, but the victory is temporary. Always there is at least one looser, sometimes two. Anger and resentment fester, the situation continues and eventually it flares up again. Confrontation would be the worst possible solution.

The third and best possible method is through communication. Each of the two students must calmly express his or her feelings, verbalize how he or she perceives the situation, listen to one another, and arrive at a mutually acceptable resolution. This process could be done under the direction of an adult, but it is less threatening when they are aided in this process by one of their peers. This is what has been accomplished in this school through peer mediation. The program is still in its growth stages, but already it shows some success, as measured by the student self assessment instrument. Therefore, this writer recommends that it be continued as an ongoing program in the school.

This writer expects the number of referrals to peer mediation to commence in the new school year near the level of referrals at the conclusion of the previous year, and for the new seventh and eighth graders to continue using peer mediation as they did while in sixth and seventh grades. He

recommends that incoming sixth grade students be introduced to peer mediation, and invited to apply for training as peer mediators, within the first two months of the new academic year.

Likewise, this writer believes that the program of group exercises to make students more aware of the attitudes and feelings of others, is meeting success, and is in part responsible for the improvement seen in the post administration of the student self assessment instrument. Thus, he recommends that this program of group exercises be continued as an ongoing process. Toward this end, this writer will solicit ideas for new topics from students and staff.

The post administration of the student self assessment instrument revealed that 55 students, or 9.1% of the student body, are involved in situations of being both bully and victim. This writer recommends that an attempt be made to reach out to these students, encouraging them to make use of the counseling opportunities at school, in addition to peer mediation.

One teacher came to this writer complaining that one of the peer mediators did not do a homework assignment and cut that teacher's class. The teacher thought that the student should be removed as a peer mediator as a consequence of this action. This writer elucidated to that teacher the characteristics sought in selecting peer mediators. These are not the same as those sought in selecting honor society

students, and the actions of the two groups of students should not be equated. Subsequently, this writer did talk with the student about perceptions people have of peer mediators and the expectations of their positive role modeling by all staff. However, this writer recommends that a presentation about peer mediation be made at one of the early faculty meetings in the new school year, so that teachers are reminded of the qualities sought in selecting peer mediators, and not expect something else.

Finally, since the building statement on harassment was written as a culminating activity and promulgated so late in the school year, this writer recommends that this document be presented to students as a building policy at the beginning of the school year. Then this document should be used as a basis for discussions on expected student behavior toward all those around them.

Dissemination

This writer is on the planning committee for the annual regional conference of the *New York Counseling Association*, and is certain that he will be presenting a workshop based on this practicum at one of that association's conferences.

In addition, this writer plans submitting an article based on this practicum to The Journal of the Professional Counselor. Their manuscript requirements specify that any work submitted must not exceed 20 pages, which precludes submission of the actual practicum report.

If approved to do so, this writer will submit a copy of the practicum report to the *Educational Resources Information Center* (ERIC).

Copies of this report will be given to administrators at building and district levels.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY OF TEACHERS

Please respond to the following and return to Paul McMahon.

1. In an average week, how much time do you spend settling disputes between students?

.....

2. In an average week, how much time do you spend settling down students who are upset because of problems with other kids?

.....

3. Would you like a program in school to help students solve interpersonal problems?

yes no

APPENDIX B

STUDENT SELF ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

Please answer all questions honestly. Note that you are not asked to sign your name.

Circle your grade and gender 6 7 8 female male

After each of the following statements circle the response that most clearly reflects your true feelings.

Girls like the attention when boys mess up their hair.

agree disagree

When you are verbally threatened you are harmed.

agree disagree

It is O.K. to hit someone who hits me first.

agree disagree

It is O.K. to pass notes to my friend about someone I don't like.

agree disagree

If I am having a problem with someone, I should get my friends to ignore him or her.

agree disagree

If someone picks on me I tell an adult.

agree disagree

Has anyone bullied you during the last month?

yes no

If "yes," how often?

1 or 2 times 6 to 10 times

3 to 5 times more than 10 times

Have you bullied someone during the last month?

yes no

If "yes," how often?

1 or 2 times 6 to 10 times

3 to 5 times more than 10 times

When I am having a personal problem, the student I trust most to talk to about it is.....

APPENDIX C

SELF ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT FOR PEER MEDIATORS

Please answer all questions honestly. Note that you are not asked to sign your name.

Circle your grade and gender 6 7 8 female male

Please answer each of the following. If you need more room, use the back of this form.

1. Give an example of how being a peer mediator helped you develop or strengthen the ability to hear others in an insightful way?

_____

_____

2. Give an example of how being a peer mediator helped you develop or strengthen the ability to act toward others with courtesy?

_____

_____

3. What else did you learn from being a peer mediator?

_____

_____

4. What steps in the mediation process do you think you do very well?

_____

_____

5. What steps in the mediation process do you think you need to strengthen?

_____

APPENDIX D

MATERIALS USED FOR GROUP SESSIONS

Group Session on Harassment

Please have your class read and discuss the following letter to a newspaper advise columnist. Then have them list the points that should be made in the response, while you write them on the blackboard or overhead projector. If no student suggests a series of one on one peer mediations with the worst offenders, please lead them to this point.

Dear Annie,

Every day, when I go home from school, I think that things could never be worse. But then I come to school the next day and things are worse. Nobody ever says anything nice to me. Some ignore me when I talk to them. But worse, at lunchtime, between classes, and even during classes, kids come up to me and call me "fatso," or tell me I'm ugly. I already know I'm fat and ugly, and don't need to be reminded. Sometimes, at lunchtime, kids break into line in front of me, and tell me I don't need lunch because I'm too fat. Sometimes, when I sit at a lunch table, kids tell me to go away. Sometimes, kids hit me or poke me for no reason at all. I don't say or do anything to them to cause it.

I hate to come to school, but my mother makes me. What can I do?

Signed,

Harassed

Group Session on Friendship

Divide the class into groups of six or seven. Have each group decide on a recorder/reporter.

Each group's chore is to list and discuss characteristics they desire in a friend. After ten minutes, return to a large group, and have the recorder/reporter tell the class three characteristics from his or her group's list. Teachers should write this list on the blackboard or overhead projector.

During this process, teachers are asked to stress that friendships are built on similarities, but that friends respect areas of difference.

Group Session on Giving and Receiving Apologies

One or two days before the group session, select two students in each class who would be good at role playing. Give them the following situation, and let them create their own dialogue for a role playing session, before their classmates, of no more than four or five minutes.

Following the role playing, ask the other students to comment on what they liked about the way this apology was given and received. Then ask them what they might have done differently. Also ask the two role playing students how they felt giving and receiving the apology.

In the course of discussion, please point out that apologies should be sincere; that often both parties need to apologize to each other; and that apologies need to be given and received graciously.

Situation:

Student A - Student B knocked over your newly opened bottle of Snapple and most of it spilled out. Student B says it was an accident, but you do not know whether or not to believe him or her, because your friends have told you that Student B has been calling you a "nerd." You want an apology.

Student B - You knocked over Student A's bottle of Snapple. However, you don't like Student B because your friends have told you that he or she has been calling you "stuck up," and you think you overheard him or her say it once. You want Student A to apologize for talking about you.

Group Session on Body Language

First, ask students for examples showing how they know when someone is happy, sad, angry, impatient or worried.

Second, discuss the roles of body positioning, facial expressions, gesticulations and tone of voice in communication, pointing out that changes in these can change the meaning of the words being spoken.

Third, ask for volunteers to express each of the following sentences in the ways listed after it:

"Come on, or we'll miss the bus."

informing

impatient

angry

"I love your new sweater."

complimentary

sarcastically

"I don't know where she is."

worried

annoyed

don't care attitude

"You said you'd call me when you got home."

reminder

angry

questioning

Fourth, discuss the need to be aware of the messages we send every time we speak.

Group Session on Handling Embarrassment

Please have your class read and discuss the following letter to a newspaper advice columnist. Then have them list the points that should be made in the response, while you list them on the blackboard or overhead projector. If no student suggests the following four points, please lead the class to them: 1) everyone experiences embarrassment, 2) often we might think people are focused on us, when really they are not, 3) embarrassment can be used as a learning experience, helping us know what actions or speech to avoid and 4) as we grow in self confidence, we usually embarrass less often.

Dear Annie,

I don't know why I embarrass so easily. Any time a teacher calls on me, even if I know the answer, I feel embarrassed. It happens whenever I say or do something and my friends give me that "dumb" look. It even happens when one of my friends says something bad about another friend.

It happens every time my mother insists that I go shopping with her and we run into one of my friends. She always says or does something stupid to embarrass me.

My friends are going out for cheerleading, and want me to join them. I'd love to be a cheerleader, but I just know that I'll say or do something dumb and wind up embarrassed, or that my mother will come to watch me and do or say something to embarrass me. What should I do?

Signed,

Embarrassed

Group Session on Listening Skills

One or two days before the group session, select four students in each class who would be good at role playing. Let them create a four or five minute dialogue in which three of them are discussing something they find interesting, such as an experience while shopping at the local mall. These three should be talking and actively listening to each other. The fourth person in this group should be looking all around, turning away from the speakers, calling greetings to someone not in this group, flipping through a book, interrupting with a totally irrelevant statement or question, checking his or her watch, yawning, fidgeting, etc.

Following the role playing, ask students to identify the active listeners and the characteristics they exhibited. In the course of discussion, please point out that the active listener 1) looks at the person who is speaking, 2) shows interest by making relevant comments, asking appropriate questions, nodding his or her head or just saying "uh huh," 3) listens for the feelings of the speaker, 4) does not interrupt and 5) does not change the topic in the middle of the conversation.

Group Session on Loneliness

Please have your class read and discuss the following letter to a newspaper advise columnist. Then have them list the points that that should be made in the response, while you list them on the blackboard or overhead projector. If no student suggests the following three points, please lead the class to them: 1) find areas of interest and get involved in activities, clubs or teams in those areas, either as school related endeavors or ones totally outside of school, such as church, 4-H, girl scouts, boy scouts, community centers and recreational sports leagues, 2) initiate pleasant, simple, non-threatening conversation with others and 3) talk about this problem with a school counselor or favorite teacher.

Dear Annie:

Nobody ever bothers with me at school. It's not that they pick on me, it's more like I'm just not even there. No one walks or talks with me between classes. Usually, no one sits next to me in class or on the school bus, and when they do, they turn and talk to others around us. Everybody has lunch with their friends and I am left alone.

At home, there are no kids my age living near me, so after I finish chores and do homework, I just read, watch TV or play Nintendo. But really I'd rather be doing things with other people. How can I change this?

Signed,

Lonely

Group Session on Being Angry

Divide the class into groups of six or seven students. Have each group decide on a recorder/reporter. Teachers are asked to explain the following: 1) everyone gets angry sometimes, and the way that anger is expressed is important, 2) often, a person who makes another angry, does not know he or she caused anger and 3) holding onto anger can cause stress and other physical symptoms, even depression.

Each group's chore is to list appropriate ways of dealing with anger.

After ten minutes reassemble the class to a large group, and ask each recorder/reporter to present three characteristics from his or her group's list. Teachers should write this list on the blackboard or overhead projector.

Teachers might make any of the following suggestions if they are not advanced by the students.

1) Request peer mediation with a student who made you angry.

2) Explain how you feel in a letter to someone who hurt you, even though you might not mail the letter.

3) Let go of the anger. Don't deliberately hold on to it and nurse it.

4) Try to forgive a person who hurt you.

5) Talk about the anger with a counselor or favorite teacher.

6) Try to learn what you can about the incident that caused anger, looking for "flags" that will help you avoid

such incidents in the future.

7) Experience physical release through productive, non-violent ways, such as running, hitting or kicking a ball, punching a punching bag or pillow, swimming fast, lifting weights, etc. Non-acceptable ways, such as pounding walls or lockers, kicking animals and beating up other people, lead to injury, further problems and further anger.

APPENDIX E

COMPILATION OF RESPONSES TO STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

Girls like the attention when boys mess up their hair.

Grade 6

	Pre administration		Post administration	
N=	191		194	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
no. boys	22	60	12	75
no. girls	14	95	14	93
total no.	36	155	26	168
% of total	18.8%	81.2%	13.4%	86.6%
margin of error	±2.8%		±2.4%	

Grade 7

	Pre administration		Post administration	
N=	188		196	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
no. boys	18	81	10	93
no. girls	8	81	7	86
total no.	26	162	17	179
% of total	13.8%	86.2%	8.7%	91.3%
margin of error	±2.5%		±2.0%	

Grade 8

	Pre administration		Post administration	
N=	210		215	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
no. boys	21	81	15	92
no. girls	15	93	7	101
total no.	36	174	22	193
% of total	17.1%	82.9%	10.2%	89.8%
margin of error	±2.6%		±2.1%	

Total School

	Pre administration		Post administration	
N=	589		605	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
no. boys	61	222	37	260
no. girls	37	269	28	280
total no.	98	491	65	540
% of total	16.6%	83.4%	10.7%	89.3%
margin of error	±1.5%		±1.3%	

Preferred response - disagree

Difference between administrations in the number of students who chose the response not preferred - 33 (decrease)

Per cent of change - 33.7% (decrease)

When you are verbally threatened you are harmed.

Grade 6

	Pre administration		Post administration	
N=	191		194	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
no. boys	46	36	72	15
no. girls	70	39	80	27
total no.	116	75	152	42
% of total	60.7%	39.3%	78.4%	21.6%
margin of error	±3.5%		±3.0%	

Grade 7

	Pre administration		Post administration	
N=	188		196	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
no. boys	45	54	65	38
no. girls	53	36	72	21
total no.	98	90	137	59
% of total	52.1%	47.9%	69.9%	30.1%
margin of error	±3.6%		±3.3%	

Grade 8

	Pre administration		Post administration	
N=	210		215	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
no. boys	52	50	68	39
no. girls	66	42	76	32
total no.	118	92	144	71
% of total	56.2%	43.8%	67.0%	33.0%
margin of error	±3.4%		±3.2%	

Total School

	Pre administration		Post administration	
N=	589		605	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
no. boys	143	140	205	92
no. girls	189	117	228	80
total no.	332	257	433	172
% of total	56.4%	43.6%	71.6%	28.4%
margin of error	±2.0%		±1.8%	

Preferred response - agree

Difference between administrations in the number of students who chose the response not preferred - 85 (decrease)

Per cent of change - 33.1% (decrease)

It is O.K. to hit someone who hits me first.

Grade 6

	Pre administration		Post administration	
N=	191		194	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
no. boys	48	34	42	45
no. girls	42	67	42	65
total no.	90	101	84	110
% of total	47.1%	52.9%	43.3%	56.7%
margin of error	±3.6%		±3.6%	

Grade 7

	Pre administration		Post administration	
N=	188		196	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
no. boys	70	29	79	24
no. girls	64	25	55	38
total no.	134	54	134	62
% of total	71.3%	28.7%	68.4%	31.6%
margin of error	±3.3%		±3.3%	

Grade 8

	Pre administration		Post administration	
N=	210		215	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
no. boys	82	20	79	28
no. girls	86	22	76	32
total no.	168	42	155	60
% of total	80.0%	20.0%	72.1%	27.9%
margin of error	±2.8%		±3.1%	

Total School

	Pre administration		Post administration	
N=	589		605	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
no. boys	200	83	200	97
no. girls	192	114	173	135
total no.	392	197	373	232
% of total	66.6%	33.4%	61.7%	38.3%
margin of error	±1.9%		±2.0%	

Preferred response - disagree

Difference between administrations in the number of students who chose the response not preferred - 19 (decrease)

Per cent of change - 4.8% (decrease)

It is O.K. to pass notes to my friend about someone I don't like.

Grade 6

	Pre administration		Post administration	
N=	191		194	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
no. boys	21	61	20	67
no. girls	25	84	37	70
total no.	46	145	57	137
% of total	24.1%	75.9%	29.4%	70.6%
margin of error	±3.1%		±3.3%	

Grade 7

	Pre administration		Post administration	
N=	188		196	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
no. boys	46	53	43	60
no. girls	42	47	22	71
total no.	88	100	65	131
% of total	46.8%	53.2%	33.2%	66.8%
margin of error	±3.6%		±3.4%	

Grade 8

	Pre administration		Post administration	
N=	210		215	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
no. boys	51	51	38	69
no. girls	49	59	39	69
total no.	100	110	77	138
% of total	47.6%	52.4%	35.8%	64.2%
margin of error	±3.4%		±3.3%	

Total School

	Pre administration		Post administration	
N=	589		605	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
no. boys	118	165	101	196
no. girls	116	190	98	210
total no.	234	355	199	406
% of total	39.7%	60.3%	32.9%	67.1%
margin of error	±2.0%		±1.9%	

Preferred response - disagree

Difference between administrations in the number of students who chose the response not preferred - 35 (decrease)

Per cent of change - 15.0% (decrease)

If I am having a problem with someone, I should get my friends to ignore him or her.

Grade 6

	Pre administration		Post administration	
N=	191		194	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
no. boys	27	55	15	72
no. girls	16	93	20	87
total no.	43	148	35	159
% of total	22.5%	77.5%	18.0%	82.0%
margin of error	±3.0%		±2.8%	

Grade 7

	Pre administration		Post administration	
N=	188		196	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
no. boys	33	66	21	82
no. girls	20	69	4	89
total no.	53	135	25	171
% of total	28.2%	71.8%	12.8%	87.2%
margin of error	±3.3%		±2.4%	

Grade 8

	Pre administration		Post administration	
N=	210		215	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
no. boys	22	80	17	90
no. girls	21	87	11	97
total no.	43	167	28	187
% of total	20.5%	79.5%	13.0%	87.0%
margin of error	±2.8%		±2.3%	

Total School

	Pre administration		Post administration	
N=	589		605	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
no. boys	82	201	53	244
no. girls	57	249	35	273
total no.	139	450	88	517
% of total	23.6%	76.4%	14.5%	85.5%
margin of error	±1.7%		±1.4%	

Preferred response - disagree

Difference between administrations in the number of students who chose the response not preferred - 51 (decrease)

Per cent of change - 36.7% (decrease)

If someone picks on me I tell an adult.

Grade 6

	Pre administration		Post administration	
N=	191		194	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
no. boys	61	21	60	27
no. girls	77	32	80	27
total no.	138	53	140	54
% of total	72.3%	27.7%	72.2%	27.8%
margin of error	±3.2%		±3.2%	

Grade 7

	Pre administration		Post administration	
N=	188		196	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
no. boys	45	54	54	49
no. girls	52	37	60	33
total no.	97	91	114	82
% of total	51.6%	48.4%	58.2%	41.8%
margin of error	±3.6%		±3.5%	

Grade 8

	Pre administration		Post administration	
N=	210		215	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
no. boys	30	72	38	69
no. girls	46	62	51	57
total no.	76	134	89	126
% of total	36.2%	63.8%	41.4%	58.6%
margin of error	±3.3%		±3.4%	

Total School

	Pre administration		Post administration	
N=	589		605	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
no. boys	136	147	152	145
no. girls	175	131	191	117
total no.	311	278	343	262
% of total	52.8%	47.2%	56.7%	43.3%
margin of error	±2.1%		±2.0%	

Preferred response - agree

Difference between administrations in the number of students who chose the response not preferred - 16 (decrease)

Per cent of change - 5.8% (decrease)

Has anyone bullied you during the last month?

Grade 6

Pre Administration (N=191)

	no	yes	1 - 2 times	3 - 5 times	6 - 10 times	more than 10
no. boys	38	44	20	11	8	5
no. girls	57	52	23	16	6	7
total no.	95	96	43	27	14	12
% of total	49.7%	50.3%				
margin of error	±3.6%					

Post Administration (N=194)

	no	yes	1 - 2 times	3 - 5 times	6 - 10 times	more than 10
no. boys	70	17	7	3	2	5
no. girls	75	32	13	9	3	7
total no.	145	49	20	12	5	12
% of total	74.7%	25.3%				
margin of error	±3.1%					

Grade 7

Pre Administration (N=188)

	no	yes	1 - 2 times	3 - 5 times	6 - 10 times	more than 10
no. boys	65	34	15	8	4	7
no. girls	64	25	11	6	1	7
total no.	129	59	26	14	5	14
% of total	68.6%	31.4%				
margin of error	±3.4%					

Post Administration (N=196)

	no	yes	1 - 2 times	3 - 5 times	6 - 10 times	more than 10
no. boys	78	25	11	6	2	6
no. girls	75	18	9	7	2	0
total no.	153	43	20	13	4	6
% of total	78.1%	21.9%				
margin of error	±3.0%					

Grade 8

Pre Administration (N=210)

	no	yes	1 - 2 times	3 - 5 times	6 - 10 times	more than 10
no. boys	68	34	17	11	2	4
no. girls	86	22	11	6	4	1
total no.	154	56	28	17	6	5
% of total	73.3%	26.7%				
margin of error		±3.1%				

Post Administration (N=215)

	no	yes	1 - 2 times	3 - 5 times	6 - 10 times	more than 10
no. boys	91	16	4	9	3	0
no. girls	94	14	10	1	3	0
total no.	185	30	14	10	6	0
% of total	86.0%	14.0%				
margin of error		±2.4%				

Total School

Pre Administration (N=589)

	no	yes	1 - 2 times	3 - 5 times	6 - 10 times	more than 10
no. boys	171	112	52	30	14	16
no. girls	207	99	45	28	11	15
total no.	378	211	97	58	25	31
% of total	64.2%	35.8%				
margin of error		±2.0%				

Post Administration (N=605)

	no	yes	1 - 2 times	3 - 5 times	6 - 10 times	more than 10
no. boys	239	58	22	18	7	11
no. girls	244	64	32	17	8	7
total no.	483	122	54	35	15	18
% of total	79.8%	20.2%				
margin of error		±1.6%				

Have you bullied someone during the last month?

Grade 6

Pre Administration (N=191)

	no	yes	1 - 2 times	3 - 5 times	6 - 10 times	more than 10
no. boys	47	35	14	9	0	12
no. girls	70	39	24	10	2	3
total no.	117	74	38	19	2	15
% of total	61.3%	38.7%				
margin of error		±3.5%				

Post Administration (N=194)

	no	yes	1 - 2 times	3 - 5 times	6 - 10 times	more than 10
no. boys	63	24	8	8	3	5
no. girls	78	29	17	7	1	4
total no.	141	53	25	15	4	9
% of total	72.7%	27.3%				
margin of error		±3.2%				

Grade 7

Pre Administration (N=188)

	no	yes	1 - 2 times	3 - 5 times	6 - 10 times	more than 10
no. boys	61	38	23	8	3	4
no. girls	62	27	21	1	2	3
total no.	123	65	44	9	5	7
% of total	65.4%	34.6%				
margin of error		±3.5%				

Post Administration (N=196)

	no	yes	1 - 2 times	3 - 5 times	6 - 10 times	more than 10
no. boys	70	33	12	6	2	13
no. girls	74	19	12	4	2	1
total no.	144	52	24	10	4	14
% of total	73.5%	26.5%				
margin of error		±3.2%				

Grade 8

Pre Administration (N=210)

	no	yes	1 - 2 times	3 - 5 times	6 - 10 times	more than 10
no. boys	61	41	20	9	5	7
no. girls	70	38	22	7	3	6
total no.	131	79	42	16	8	13
% of total	62.4%	37.6%				
margin of error	±3.4%					

Post Administration (N=215)

	no	yes	1 - 2 times	3 - 5 times	6 - 10 times	more than 10
no. boys	74	33	16	7	2	8
no. girls	75	33	10	13	3	7
total no.	149	66	26	20	5	15
% of total	69.3%	30.7%				
margin of error	±3.1%					

Total School

Pre Administration (N=589)

	no	yes	1 - 2 times	3 - 5 times	6 - 10 times	more than 10
no. boys	169	114	57	26	8	23
no. girls	202	104	67	18	7	12
total no.	371	218	124	44	15	35
% of total	63.0%	37.0%				
margin of error	±2.0%					

Post Administration (N=605)

	no	yes	1 - 2 times	3 - 5 times	6 - 10 times	more than 10
no. boys	207	90	36	21	7	26
no. girls	227	81	39	24	6	12
total no.	434	171	75	45	13	38
% of total	71.7%	28.3%				
margin of error	±1.8%					

APPENDIX F

EXPLANATION OF PEER MEDIATION FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS

Throughout life, conflict is inevitable. Our children are exposed, in a variety of ways, to role models who use violent means, rather than peaceful means, to resolve conflict. We, as educators and parents, need to do more than just say to children, "don't fight." We need to teach our children how to resolve conflicts in an acceptable and non-violent manner. We see peer mediation as an effective means to help us accomplish this end.

What is peer mediation?

Peer mediation is a process of conflict resolution in which students work together to solve their own problems. Some students at each grade level will be trained to assist their peers in developing appropriate solutions to conflicts.

What is the purpose of peer mediation?

This program provides a procedure for students to find solutions to student-student problems. It is designed to prevent conflicts from reaching the "fight" stage. In so doing, all students learn proper ways to resolve disputes.

What are the goals of peer mediation?

The goals of peer mediation are:

1) For disputants to understand and respect different views.
2) To open and improve communication.
3) To develop cooperation in solving a common problem.
4) To reach agreements that address the interests of both sides.

Does peer mediation take the place of our present

referral system?

No, the peer mediation program is not designed to handle problems that need attention by a teacher, administrator, guidance counselor, psychologist or student assistance coordinator. It is designed to prevent student-student disputes from reaching the stage at which adult intervention is needed.

Does peer mediation place these adult responsibilities on children, also?

The children who are peer mediators are not counseling and/or playing psychologist, are not in any way taking on the burdens of the students in conflict and are not taking sides with either of the disputants. They are simply guiding two students with different views through an established series of steps to arrive at a mutually acceptable course of action.

What is a peer mediator?

A peer mediator is a student who has been trained to conduct a meeting between two fellow students, or peers, who have conflicting views, and are willing to settle them in a peaceful way. The peer mediator makes sure that the rules for peer mediation are followed, and that the peer mediation session is fair and helpful to both opposing peers.

What are the rules for peer mediation?

There are a few simple rules:

1) Peer mediation is a process that both conflicting students choose.

2) Everything said during a peer mediation session is kept confidential. What is said in the peer mediation room stays in the room.
3) In peer mediation, students take turns talking, and no one can interrupt.
4) The student mediator does not take sides.

Who is present at peer mediation sessions?

There are five people present at the session: the two conflicting students, two trained peer mediators (one conducting the session and one observing), and a staff member who is trained in peer mediation.

How are students referred for peer mediation?

Students will be encouraged to refer themselves when they are harassed or see some other conflict brewing. They may also refer friends they see in that situation. All professional staff will refer students for peer mediation when they observe a situation which they judge needs intervention to prevent escalation.

How will peer mediators be selected?

Students who are interested in becoming peer mediators will be invited to apply. A faculty committee will interview applicants and select a small group that is a true cross section of the various groups among our students.

What are the characteristics of a good peer mediator?

A peer mediator must demonstrate good communication skills, good thinking skills, and good judgment. He or she must be mature enough to keep information confidential and assertive

enough to enforce rules. The peer mediator must also have respect among his or her peers.

APPENDIX G

STUDENT APPLICATION FORM
TO BE A PEER MEDIATOR

APPLICATION TO BE A PEER MEDIATOR

PART I

Name_____Grade____Homeroom____Team____

PART II

1. Why would you like to be a mediator?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. What characteristics do you have that would make you a good mediator?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. How would you handle this situation?

Jane and Sally have been arguing with each other for days. They used to be friends but lately there has been name calling and inappropriate comments from both. They have agreed to take their situation to peer mediation.

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. List any other school or community activities you are involved in.

_____

_____

_____

PART III

1. Name two teachers who would recommend you.

_____

_____

2. If you can, get recommendations from five students.

Student's signature_____

Student's signature_____

Student's signature_____

Student's signature_____

Student's signature_____

PART IV

1. Acquire the permission of your parent (or guardian) to apply for the position of peer mediator.

I have read the attached description of the program and give my permission for my son/daughter to apply for the position of peer mediator.

Parent/guardian signature_____

2. I have gone over the form with my parents, and I am willing to have an interview with the peer mediator selection committee.

Signature of applicant_____

APPENDIX H

ARTICLE FOR SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Throughout life, conflict is inevitable. Our children are exposed, in a variety of ways, to role models who use violent means, rather than peaceful means, to resolve conflict. We, as educators and parents, need to do more than just say to children, "don't fight." We need to teach our children how to resolve conflicts in an acceptable and non-violent manner. We see peer mediation as an effective means to help us accomplish this end.

Peer mediation is a process of conflict resolution in which students work together to solve their own problems. Some students at each grade level have been trained to conduct a meeting between two fellow students, or peers, who have conflicting views, and are willing to settle their differences in a peaceful way. These peer mediators take the conflicting students through an established series of steps to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution. A teacher, trained in peer mediation, is present at all sessions.

Sometimes middle school students can be extremely cruel to others. Occasionally, students are crushed by an innocent statement that is misunderstood. But more often the hurting remarks are malicious and deliberate. Adults do a disservice to both the offended student and the offending student when such remarks are not addressed. This is an example of a conflict that can be resolved by peer mediation. We suggest that parents prompt children in situations such as this to seek peer mediation as an

effective way of addressing the problem.

APPENDIX I

PEER MEDIATION REQUEST FORM

PEER MEDIATION REQUEST

Date_____

Names of students in conflict:

_____Grade_____

_____Grade_____

Briefly describe the problem:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Mediation requested by (please check one):

___Staff ☞ Please make sure both parties agree to mediation before referring.

___Students' friend ☞ Please make sure both parties agree to mediation before referring.

___Student in the conflict ☞ Has the other student in conflict with you already agreed to mediation? Please check one ☞ ___Yes ___No

Signature of person requesting mediation:

_____

APPENDIX J

BUILDING STATEMENT ON HARASSMENT

These are occurrences we see at our school which we do not like:

- name calling
- threats of physical harm
- tripping
- pushing
- hitting
- knocking over books
- throwing things
- stealing things from others
- nasty comments
- disgustingly filthy comments
- spitballs
- spitting at others
- putting hands on others in places they should not be
- kids talking back to teachers and getting away with it
- making fun of others
- picking on others, especially those who are different

We would like to see our school as:

- a safe environment
- a place where students are free from fear of:
    - having things stolen, broken or thrown around
    - physical harm
    - harassment
- a place where students keep their hands to themselves
- a place where all people are more sensitive to the feelings of others

- a place where everyone is treated fairly, a place free from favoritism and sexism

Things we would like to see promoted to improve our school:

- peer mediation to help resolve all student conflicts
- constant reminders for everyone to respect everyone else and their belongings
- encourage students, whenever they are victimized, to find a private moment and tell a teacher, guidance counselor or administrator about it
- whenever students do something that could cause them problems with the legal system, they should be told what would likely happen if the police were called